

## **Title**

What if there's more to performance than just cycling? Examining the perceptual basis of pacing during sprint-distance triathlon.

## **Abstract**

Whilst pacing is frequently highlighted as a key aspect of successful athletic performance, there has been little consideration of how theories of pace regulation relate specifically to multi-modal endurance events. This presentation therefore aims to summarise a series of studies which have collectively examined performance, pacing, physiology and perception during sprint-distance triathlon, to try to better understand how athletes prioritise and distribute their effort across successive modes of exercise in the pursuit of optimum overall performance. Of these studies, particular attention will be paid to that which has examined the effects of deceptively aggressive bike pacing on performance and psychophysiological status during simulated sprint-distance triathlon. In doing so, evidence will be presented which i) illustrates the potential for expectations and beliefs to have a practically meaningful effect on pacing and performance during multi-modal athletic performance, and ii) suggests that particular psychophysiological and emotional constructs (e.g. RPE and affect) may be less closely tied with pace optimisation than has been inferred previously. As such, the work presented will question whether existing 'mainstream' pacing theories can adequately explain the complex anticipatory processes which underpin performance during multi-modal (i.e. triathlon) or multi-stage (i.e. Tour de France) sporting events, and will hopefully serve to stimulate further discussion regarding the future exploration of this topic.